

University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Strategic Vision
DRAFT as of December 14, 2020

Our Role

As the flagship, land-grant university of the state we are dedicated to amplifying the Volunteer Spirit of selfless leadership in every life we touch. We listen and learn from one another – an ongoing, ever-expanding conversation fueled by a wealth of perspectives and experiences. We know how much is possible when we unite our individual talents and aspirations, put compassion front and center, and step forward together as Volunteers.

Our Vision

A world enriched by our ideas, improved through action, and inspired by the Volunteer Spirit of service and leadership.

Our Mission

We are a diverse community with a shared commitment to discovery, creativity, and education. At UT Knoxville we:

- Empower learners of all ages and backgrounds to achieve their dreams through accessible and affordable education;
- Advance the prosperity, well-being, and vitality of communities across Tennessee and around the world through our research, teaching, service, and engagement; and
- Commit to excellence, equity, and inclusion within the university, across the state, and in all our global activities.

Goals

1. Provide high-quality educational opportunities for people at every stage of life, whenever and wherever they seek to learn.
2. Create a more just, prosperous, and sustainable future through world-class research, scholarship, and creative work.
3. Develop and sustain a nurturing university culture where diversity and community are enduring sources of strength.
4. Empower and sustain a culture of collaboration, agility, and innovation throughout the university.
5. Connect with every Tennessean and with communities around the world, inspiring future Volunteers to join our diverse community.

We work together, collaborating across boundaries and disciplines, to achieve these goals and thus fulfill our mission and vision. Strategies and tactics to achieve these goals follow below.

GOAL 1:

Provide high-quality educational opportunities that meet the needs of students, whenever and wherever they seek to learn.

As Tennessee's flagship university, we have a commitment to light the way for others and to serve as a catalyst for opportunities—on our campus and in communities near and far. This goal challenges us to provide innovative, enriching learning experiences and to extend the reach of our mission. To accomplish this goal we will:

Provide students at all levels with opportunities to engage in rich learning and scholarship that is collaborative, experiential, affordable, and relevant.

1. Create a "Volunteer" experience for every student that engages them in solving real-world problems that connect the classroom to the world;
2. Promote active engagement in the research enterprise for all students; and
3. Ensure successful learning opportunities through robust academic support.

Deliver educational opportunities that are responsive to the needs of learners.

1. Develop innovative models for degree, non-degree programs, and certificate programs that are accessible and responsive to the needs of learners;
2. Create flexible, modular learning structures that allow students to choose sets of courses that interest them and then combine these modules in individualized ways; and
3. Challenge each academic unit to reimagine and adapt the learning opportunities they offer to make these innovative models and modular structures available across the university.

Make our education accessible in communities across Tennessee and beyond.

1. Identify the populations who have not participated in educational programs and collaborate with them in developing programming responsive to their needs;
2. Reimagine the land-grant mission to greatly extend the range of educational opportunities we offer beyond the Knoxville campus; and
3. Remove administrative and organizational barriers that limit the scope and effectiveness of a reimagined land-grant mission.

Incentivize educational innovation and outreach.

1. Identify gaps in student learning needs and incentivize academic and non-academic departments to close gaps;
2. Reward student participation in outreach and volunteerism;
3. Incentivize and support faculty innovation in alternative learning and instruction methods; and
4. Recognize and reward engagement and outreach efforts in performance reviews.

We measure our success in achieving this goal by increasing:

- ✓ Recognition of the breadth, quality, accessibility, and desirability of UT Knoxville educational programs, as measured by systematic feedback and the success of our graduates.
- ✓ Access to and participation in UT Knoxville curricular and co-curricular opportunities.
- ✓ Breadth of populations served by UT Knoxville.
- ✓ Numbers of innovative degree, non-degree, and certificate programs.

GOAL 2:

Create a more just, prosperous, and sustainable future through world-class research, scholarship, and creative work.

Discovery and problem solving are different at the University of Tennessee—and so are the knowledge and solutions that emerge. We thrive on perspectives and partnerships that stretch our thinking in every direction. To enhance our ability to make our world better we will:

Strengthen the impact and reputation of our research, scholarship, and creative activities.

1. Invest in diverse world-class talent, their bold ideas, and state-of-the-art infrastructure to support the research enterprise;
2. Reimagine our strategic partnership with the Oak Ridge National Lab (ORNL) and launch and grow the Oak Ridge Institute at UT, leveraging our assets on the ORNL campus; and
3. Inform our communities of research results and creative impact in clear and accessible ways.

Ensure the research outcomes we generate lead to the creation of a more just, prosperous, and sustainable future.

1. Expand and sustain strategic partnerships with governments, industry, national labs, non-profits, and community organizations to improve research outcomes and translate them into effective use;
2. Prepare current and future generations of Vol entrepreneurs to transform discoveries and ideas into products, services and actions;

3. Increase the number of high growth companies created and nurtured in partnership with the UT Knoxville community to enhance our contributions to the global innovation economy;
4. Co-locate university, corporate, and non-profit research and development facilities, incubator, and accelerator programs; and
5. Provide opportunities for all disciplines to participate in these efforts.

Integrate new research knowledge into the curriculum to enhance learning opportunities for students at all levels.

1. Align investments in research and teaching to support curricular innovations in research priority areas;
2. Establish and expand multidisciplinary degree programs in collaboration with strategic partners;
3. Increase external support for research traineeships and fellowships at both undergraduate and graduate levels; and
4. Substantially increase the size and diversity of our postdoc community, and implement a postdoctoral fellow support program.

We measure our success in achieving this goal by increasing:

- ✓ National and international recognition measured by citations, scholarly publications, exhibitions and performances, faculty awards and recognitions, sponsored project expenditures, and national centers of excellence.
- ✓ Invention disclosures, licensing, and start-up businesses resulting from UT research.
- ✓ Strategic partnerships with national laboratories, non-profits, community organizations and industries across Tennessee and around the world.
- ✓ Participation from all major divisions of knowledge (STEM, social science, arts, humanities) to advance a more just, prosperous, and sustainable future.

GOAL 3:

Develop and sustain a nurturing university culture where diversity and community are enduring sources of strength.

We commit to creating inclusive learning and work environments where civility, accountability, cultural competency, and equitable access are hallmarks of the UT Knoxville community. We value and affirm differences in race, culture, worldviews, beliefs, identities, and abilities. These efforts are indispensable to attracting and retaining the students, faculty, and staff whose energy and commitment fulfill our mission. To accomplish this goal we will:

Implement structures and practices necessary to bring UT Knoxville's culture and diversity expectations to fruition.

1. Implement diversity action plans that promote a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive culture;
2. Coordinate diversity efforts across units;
3. Prioritize events and activities that reflect the "Vol means All" mentality;
4. Welcome and include individuals from minoritized communities; and
5. Engage alumni and the broader community in conversations about the importance of culture and diversity at today's UT Knoxville.

Nurture change to achieve diversity and to demonstrate inclusive behaviors across our administration, faculty and staff.

1. Invest in diversity training opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators;
2. Require annual training for employees that focuses on creating welcoming climates;
3. Prioritize diversity and inclusion discussions within every academic department and administrative unit; and
4. Hold campus units accountable for achieving diversity goals by evaluating unit leaders on these outcomes.

Challenge students to examine their understandings of the world and their capacity to act as members of an inclusive community.

1. Engage with students to set standards for their participation in a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive culture;
2. Require all students to enroll in a course that highlights relevant intersectional identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, ability, and sexuality; and
3. Engage undergraduate and graduate students in courageous conversations about diversity and culture.

Attract and retain a diverse community of faculty, staff, and students.

1. Support and implement existing recruitment and retention plans;
2. Increase enrollment of diverse populations on-campus and for students learning with us from afar;
3. Identify key out-of-state and international markets for recruitment;
4. Increase access to the university by investing in more initiatives like the Tri-Star scholarship program; and
5. Identify and remedy structural impediments to recruiting and retaining students and employees from diverse populations.

We measure our success in achieving this goal by increasing:

- ✓ Increased diversity and retention of all students, staff, and faculty.
- ✓ Perceptions of belonging and inclusion throughout the UT Knoxville community, including minority and at-risk populations.
- ✓ Positive feedback on the quality of on-boarding and diversity training programs.

GOAL 4:

Empower and sustain a culture of collaboration, adaptability, and innovation.

Meeting the changing needs of society and achieving our institutional goals requires collaboration, adaptability, and innovation. To foster collaboration and adaptation that goes far beyond how we operate to become our ethos we will:

Adapt current structures to foster collaboration and support innovation.

1. Implement flexible work assignments across silos that foster increased collaboration and innovation;
2. Improve administrative policies and practices to save time, streamline processes, and ensure our collegial environment;
3. Create new, flexible administrative and financial systems that better support our ability to push the boundaries of discovery and learning;
4. Create university-wide infrastructure devoted to collaboration, innovation, and cross-disciplinary exchanges; and
5. Expand existing campus initiatives that foster entrepreneurship and innovation.

Incentivize cross-disciplinary research, teaching and service.

1. Identify and promote multi-disciplinary collaborative faculty projects through the Office of Research and such opportunities as APLU Innovation and Economic Prosperity program, and the Oak Ridge Institute;

2. Foster networking opportunities across the university for groups with shared interests;
3. Expand cross-disciplinary and research-cluster hires and streamline processes to facilitate such appointments; and
4. Incentivize cross-disciplinary teaching, scholarship, and student projects and simplify the application process for funding.

Reward innovation and collaboration at all levels.

1. Recognize and reward collaborative efforts across disciplinary boundaries and between units;
2. Revise the annual evaluation process for faculty, staff, and administrators to include assessments of collaboration and contributions to innovation;
3. Create innovation awards to recognize projects and programs that enhance the university's agility and its ability to innovate; and
4. Recognize staff or others who help develop better policies and procedures to facilitate our goals.

We measure our success in achieving this goal by:

- ✓ Establishment of shared definitions of cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and innovation.
- ✓ Increases in the number and extent of collaborations across disciplines and academic units.
- ✓ Year-to-year increases in faculty, staff, and student involvement in campus collaborations.
- ✓ Identifiable and documented positive change in university-wide academic and administrative practices that enhance collaboration, innovation, and institutional agility.

GOAL 5:

Connect with every Tennessean and with communities around the world, inspiring future Volunteers to join our diverse community.

Outreach and engagement are fundamental to our mission and vital to our success. Amplifying the Volunteer spirit of leadership and service—creating experiences and outcomes for everyone whose lives we touch—requires deepening our connections at home and extending our national and global networks. To expand and enhance the Volunteer community we will:

Deepen and extend the university’s ability to connect with Tennesseans.

1. Engage staff, faculty, students, and alumni with the university’s 95 county Extension Offices to educate and inform the citizens of Tennessee;
2. Partner with communities and industries to support economic development and workforce growth;
3. Identify and leverage ways in which UT Knoxville can contribute to Knoxville and other communities around the state to attract people to our communities;
4. Align university-wide communication efforts to deliver a unified institutional voice.

Engage alumni as vital members of the university community and ambassadors for UT Knoxville.

1. Connect alumni more deeply and consistently with the university’s activities;
2. Showcase the accomplishments of alumni from across the university; and
3. Include alumni in student recruitment to inspire future Volunteers;

Invigorate our global engagement efforts.

1. Bring the university’s global perspective to the citizens of Tennessee by coordinating existing outreach efforts;
2. Implement Center Global Engagement (CGE) University visioning plan and achieve international recruitment goals;
3. Highlight UT Knoxville’s global research and engagement in our communications; and
4. Facilitate Vol-to-Vol career networking events bringing together international alumni and students.

Implement a campus-wide 21st-century volunteer management program.

1. Launch a dynamic web portal to mobilize and coordinate the efforts of students, faculty, staff, and alumni as they engage together in communities across the state and beyond;
2. Ensure that each student engages in a meaningful “Volunteer” experience beyond the campus as part of their UT Knoxville experience; and
3. Connect alumni with students, faculty, and staff to engage in collaborative volunteer opportunities on and off-campus.

We measure our success in achieving this goal by increasing:

- ✓ Alumni engagement.
- ✓ Volunteerism amongst students, faculty, and staff.
- ✓ Partnerships that connect the university to communities, business, and organizations across Tennessee and around the globe.